

April 3, 2026 - John 19:30 - "It Is Finished (τετελεισται)"

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[0 : 00] We'll start with part one and what needed to be finished. I want us to begin, not with the problem though, but with the promise.

Because God did not wait until the first century to address the problem of sin, church. He addressed it immediately in a garden at the very moment sin entered the world.

And we see in Genesis 3 verse 13 that God looks at the serpent and says, I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring.

He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel. That is the first gospel sermon ever preached. And God preached it.

Before the dust of Eden had settled, God had already announced the solution. That there was going to be this crusher. This crusher was coming.

[1 : 02] One who would be wounded in the conflict, but who would ultimately destroy the destroyer. And from that very moment, the entire Old Testament is a one long heartbeat of building towards this night.

This very night, 700 years. We can even see before Calvary, Isaiah wrote as though he was standing at the cross himself. When he wrote, he was pierced for our transgressions.

He was crushed for our iniquities. A thousand years before that, we even see King David describing the crucifixion in precise detail.

And so we went over in communion through Psalm 22. This crucifixion, this detail was something that hasn't even been developed yet.

This is something new before it had been invented as a method of execution. And it's described generations before it was done. None of this church was accidental.

[2 : 08] The cross was not some plan B. And Peter declared it at Pentecost that Jesus was delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God.

John goes further and calls him the lamb slain before the foundation of the world. Church, this Good Friday was on God's calendar well before any star was hung in the sky.

The entire sacrificial system of the Old Testament that we see, the lambs, the altar, the temple, was a promissory note. God saying to his people, this points to someone whose blood can do what the blood of these animals cannot.

In the fullness of time, when every type of shadow has done its work, God kept that promise. Which brings us to a question every one of these promises was answering.

Why was such a promise necessary at all? Because this promise was glorious, but every promise answers the problem.

[3 : 28] And the problem that drove this one is more serious and more personal. Most of us are willing and wanting to admit that we don't want to grapple with it.

That is the problem of the debt of our sin. The word of God is obvious with the debt of sin. In Ezekiel 18 verse 20, The soul who sins shall die.

Not might die. Shall die. It is the settled verdict of a holy God against a sinful creature.

Paul confirms this in Romans 6 verse 23. That the wages of sin is death. A wage is something earned.

Something deserved. Something owed. Sin is not merely a bad decision. Sin is cosmic treason.

[4 : 33] Sin is a creature made in the image of God looking at the creator and saying, I don't need you. I don't need to follow your rules.

I am my own God. God. And a perfectly holy, perfectly just God cannot just look away at that.

His justice demands satisfaction. And Hebrews 9 verse 22 says it plainly. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin.

So a debt must be paid. And the debt you and I have accumulated through a lifetime of treason against a perfectly holy and just God is a debt we have no capacity to pay back.

Church, I want us to consider this image as we move forward. I want us to imagine a courtroom. Every thought, every word, every action laid bare before a judge.

[5 : 42] Everything you've ever done, said, or thought before this judge that sees everything forgets nothing.

The verdict is just. The gavel has fallen. And the sentence is death. The only question now that remains is who pays?

Perhaps you feel the weight of this question. Perhaps you feel the distance between who you are and the separation from a holy and just God and who he requires you to be.

This distance is real, church. And it is precisely that distance which drove God in his grace to make a promise he was determined to keep.

That question of who pays is what drives us to Calvary. So let us go there. Let us go there now.

[6 : 53] And stand at the cross long enough to understand not just the agony of what happened but also the achievement. As we move into part two to what was finished.

We'll look first at the accomplished work of the cross because it is possible, church, to approach the cross with mere sentimentality. You feel moved by the suffering without understanding the theology.

You see the pictures. You see the videos. You see the movies. And you see the beatings and the blood and the crucifixion. And you can feel the sentiment. You cry out.

But church, sentimentality without theology will not save you. You must understand not merely that he died but what his death accomplished.

Three things. Three things were finished on Good Friday. Three massive, eternal, world-altering things. First was the wrath of God was satisfied.

[8 : 09] God Paul writes in Romans 3 verse 25 that God put Christ forward as a propitiation by his blood. Propitiation means wrath absorbing sacrifice.

The righteous, holy anger of God against sin which is real and just and eternal was directed at Jesus Christ on the cross.

and he absorbed every single drop of it on behalf of his people. Church, do you remember Gethsemane? Jesus falls on his face and prays, my father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me.

that cup was not primarily the cup of physical suffering. No, it was the cup of divine wrath. Every transgression, every act, every act of treason, of every violation of his holy law poured into a cup.

It was this cup that Jesus looked at and he drank it. every drop until there is nothing left.

[9 : 30] Church, I want us to now think of this fire that by its very nature must consume what is combustible before it. There is no escaping it because that is the holiness of God in the presence of sin.

On this Good Friday, Jesus stepped between that fire and his people and let it consume him entirely until there is nothing left to burn.

Then he declared, it is finished. Paul writes in Romans 8, verse 1, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

No condemnation. None. Because the one who bore it bore it completely. With the wrath gone, with every drop absorbed, every flame extinguished.

But the wrath of God was not the only thing standing between us and him. The righteous demands of his holy law still had to be answered and on that same cross they were.

[10 : 44] The second thing that was fulfilled is the law of God on that cross. because church we have to remember that the standard God's law demands is not improvement.

It's not sincerity. It's not effort. It's perfection. Complete, unblemished, unbroken obedience to a perfect and holy God and not one of us has ever come close.

Not a single one. No, not one. but Christ but Jesus he did.

He is the only human being who has ever walked this earth without a single violation of this law. Not an action word or thought and it is through him that the righteous demands of God's holy law were fully and finally met.

Paul writes about this in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 21. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

[11 : 59] I want to repeat that church. He who knew no sin was made to be sin. your sin my sin everyone's sin was transferred to his account.

He bore it as though it was his very own. He was punished for those if he committed it himself. And then the most glorious of exchanges the greatest deal in the entirety of the cosmos of the eternity of history has happened that his perfect righteousness was then transferred to us. Not given gradually as we earn it. Not given and taken away when we fail. But church it was credited it was imputed it was reckoned to our account the moment we believed.

And church I don't want us to think of this as some legal fiction some legal quid pro quo or something like that. God is not pretending we are righteous while we remain filthy.

[13 : 22] No. He is declaring us righteous on the basis of a real transaction the real transfer of our sin to Christ and the real transfer of Christ's righteousness to us.

And the moment Jesus declared it is finished the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom God tore it because the barrier between sinful humanity and his holy presence had been permanently moved the way into the presence of God had been thrown open not by human effort but by the very finished work of his son Jesus Christ church we see that the law was fulfilled the veil was torn the way was open which means death sin's oldest and sharpest wage had lost the only ground it had ever stood on and we see that the power of death was broken when Paul writes in Colossians 2 that God cancelled the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands this he set aside nailing it to the cross remember the courtroom church when the charges are dropped the sentence cannot be carried out when the debt is gone the creditor has no claim death was sin's wage

When the debt was removed death no longer can be claimed and Satan he thought he was winning he thought he was winning on Friday he thought the cross was his triumph he did not understand that God was using his own instrument to defeat him to defeat Satan that the very death that Satan thought would end the story of redemption was the act that secured!

it forever so church tonight we sit in Friday we do not rush past the cross to the tomb to the resurrection to the ascension we sit here in Friday we look up and we marvel at his work but church this is all history and all of this that we just went over through is theology and it must be because the gospel without theology is mythology and pure sentiment emotionalism moralism but now I want to bring every bit of it out of the first century and set it right here in front of all of us this good Friday and part three we'll look at what it means for you for all of us on this good

Friday evening that it is finished verses our debt that debt of sin has a receipt because we must remember that word church to tell us die was the word merchant stamped across a paid debt certificate once it was stamped the creditor had no legal standing he could not come back he could not demand more money the record stood and not as evidence of debt but as evidence of payment the apostle Paul tells us in Colossians 2 that the record of debt that stood!

[17 : 16] against you every violation of God's law every act of rebellion every sin of thought and word and action was nailed to that cross 2,000 years ago and across that record the blood of Jesus Christ was stamped one word to tell us die paid in full many of you are living as though that this cross was merely just a down payment you believe Jesus did most of the work and now it is your responsibility to contribute the rest through your performance through your piety your repeated confession of sins that you keep on committing isn't it exhausting you lie awake at night wondering if you have done enough prayed enough repented sincerely enough I say to you tonight with all pastoral urgency

I possess stop help was already begotten it was not a down payment it was a final payment because it is finished however do not misunderstand me church on this side of the cross you do not stop repenting you do not stop pursuing holiness you do not stop growing in grace and walking in obedience those things are not how you complete the work they are how you respond to the work that has already been completed there is a world of difference between striving to earn what Christ has already finished and joyfully living in the light of what Christ has finished one will exhaust you and the other one will set you free!

read in the past what we've seen what we've studied what we've worshipped what we've sang about what we've prayed about what we've prayed about the fact that Jesus Christ took all of the wrath all the punishment for all of our sins and all we have to do is believe is something that I've

wrestled with it doesn't seem enough for someone who is not guilty to receive the punishment that I deserve in a fashion that was so deplorable that there has to be something more that I can do for my king I've stayed up I've prayed I've cried because I can't I couldn't understand how easy it could be for a child to be able to understand this gospel message before the hardened of hearts to reject it but it is that simple it is that easy because he does all the work and all we do is receive it because we are all standing at the same foot of this very cross with the same empty hands because nothing we can bring to him except our sin and his grace and his love and his forgiveness is more than any amount of sin that we have ever committed or will commit praise be to

God so it is this sin this debt with this receipt and if you want to see what that completion of work looks like from the side of heaven if you want to know what the one who accomplished it did when it was all over I want us now to look at his posture because our high priest our king our messiah is seated at the right hand of God and in Hebrews 10 verse 11 through 12 it starts off and every priest stands daily at the service offering repeatedly the same sacrifices which can never take away sins church this every priest we see it again and again and again we're going through second Samuel we see it all throughout the Old Testament the priests were always atoning for sin blood sacrifices the temples were always full it was never enough their job was never done they kept on standing they kept on working they kept on trying to make atonement for the sins of themselves and for those in their tribe in their community but

Hebrews 10 continues on to verse 12 but when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins he sat down at the right hand of God he sat down!

[23 : 15] The one who bore your sin observed your condemnation and fulfilled the law on your behalf he is not still on the cross he is seated and that is at the right hand of God the father in the posture of one whose work is finished the old priest stood because there is always more to be done your high priest sat down because there is nothing left to do which means the only question left is not what must I do it is how do I receive what he has already finished church your response to this is faith is not achievement because everything that I've described so far the wrath absorbed the law fulfilled the debt canceled the veil torn none of it becomes yours through your achievement with Paul writing in Ephesians 2 for by grace you have been saved through faith and this is not your own doing it is the gift of

God not as a result of works so that no one may boast the work is finished and Christ has done it and we receive it through open hands a soul that says I have nothing to offer I have no merit to bring I come with empty hands and I receive what he has finished this church is not passivity this is not passive this is true faith and it is a whole hearted trust it is a turning from self reliance to Christ reliance a clinging to Jesus as your one and only hope but it is faith it is not achievement it is not your work because the work is already finished and the faith is simply the hands that receive it so perhaps there is someone here tonight who has been to church for years who knows the vocabulary who knows the hymns who has been baptized who has been a deacon who has been a pastor who has been as a perfect record of Sunday attendance but have you ever stood at the foot of the cross in genuine brokenness to see that he did this for you he did this for me and asked have

I received it church tonight is that night the spirit of God does not press invitations without purpose before we leave tonight I want us to go back to where we started go back to the text back to the cross back to the man on the beam with the last breath in his lungs and I want you guys to hear the words again so come with me to John chapter 19 verse 30 as it reads when Jesus had received the sour wine he said it is finished and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit three things tonight church three things I want you to take home three things I want you to reflect on as we enter Easter Sunday first he received the sour wine the bitterest thing a soldier could offer he did not turn away from it he received it because he came to receive everything every bitter consequence of sin every drop of wrath he received it all to the very end second he said it he didn't think it he declared it to telestai he spoke it into the air of a sin broken world to the demons below and the angels watching above to the crowds that are gathered to mock him in front of his holy father he said it he declared it and what he said stands forever and third he bowed his head and gave up his spirit not his spirit was taken from him he gave it up sovereignly voluntarily in complete control to the very end and then even at the moment of his death

Jesus Christ was not a victim he was completing a mission and he completed it on his own terms with his own final breath this was not a tragedy this was a triumph this was good one day every

person who has ever lived will stand before the judgment seat of God the book will be opened the accuser will stand and present his case he will have evidence he has cataloged every sin every failure every act of treason and in that moment there is only one answer that will suffice not I tried hard enough not I was mostly a good person not I went to church and lived a decent life no the only answer is this is that the blood of

Jesus Christ the finished work of the cross the righteousness of the son of God was credited to me to my account and the one word that was stamped across my debt to telestai paid in full is the only answer that will be sufficient and is the answer that is available to you tonight right now through faith alone in Christ alone by grace alone I asked you at the beginning of this service when were you saved here is your answer you were saved at the ninth hour on a Friday outside the walls of [30 : 22] Jerusalem you were saved when a man who had done nothing wrong received everything you deserved you were saved the moment he drank the last drop of cup he did not fill you were saved when the record of your debt was nailed to a cross and stamped with one word that word to tell us die so whether you remember the day you first believed or whether your faith has always been something that you swam in the moment of your salvation was not the day you walked an aisle or said a prayer or felt something inside of you change no those are the days that you received it that God changed you that God came into your heart and changed your disposition renewed your mind it was not anything you did it was a receipt it was a gift it was his grace it was his love this church the moment it was accomplished was the moment he bowed his head and gave up his spirit and declared it is finished that is when you were saved 2,000 years before you were born on a hill called

Calvary in the fullness of time according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of our holy God he finished it for you he went to the cross with your name in his heart he endured every blow every nail every drop of wrath with purpose and with love and he would not stop until all of it was done and then from the heights of that cross with the last breath in his lungs he declared it is finished church may this good Friday declaration be the foundation of your life the ground of your hope and the love that compels you to serve him in the song of your eternity soli deo gloria solus Christus for the glory of God in Christ alone let us pray